

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. A method for processing medical documentation for a health care provider, comprising the steps of:
  - 5 receiving a medical source document for a health care provider;
  - assigning the medical source document to a work queue defined for specific medical treatment types; and
  - enabling a medical coder to access the medical source document in the work queue through a computer network;
  - 10 allowing the medical coder to electronically code the medical source document to create coded medical information; and
  - transmitting the coded medical information including encoded treatment procedures to the health care provider electronically.
- 15 2. A method as in claim 1, further comprising the step of creating coded medical information by enabling the medical coder to extract information from the medical source document.
- 20 3. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting the coded medical information to the health care provider further comprises the step of transmitting the coded medical information to the health care provider via an electronic communication means selected from the group of electronic communication means consisting of a fax, secure file transfer protocol (FTP), a web browser and email.
- 25 4. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of enabling a medical coder to access the medical source document in the work queue through a computer network further comprises the step of enabling a medical coder to access the medical source document via a computer network that is a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), or Internet.
- 30 5. A method for processing medical documentation for a health care provider, comprising the steps of:

receiving a medical source document for a health care provider into a hosting server enabled to receive the medical source document;

enabling a medical coder to access the medical source document on the hosting server via a computer network coupled to the hosting server;

5 facilitating the electronic creation of coded medical information including encoded treatment procedures based on the medical source document as analyzed by the medical coder; and

transmitting the coded medical information to the health care provider.

10 6. A method as in claim 5, further comprising the step of enabling the medical coder to access the medical source document on the hosting server via a network selected from the group of networks consisting of a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), and Internet.

15 7. A method as in claim 5, further comprising the step of distributing medical source documents to the medical coder using a plurality of categorized work pools.

8. A method as in claim 7, further comprising the step of distributing medical source documents to the medical coder using a plurality of prioritized work queues.

20 9. A method as in claim 5, wherein the step of enabling a medical coder to access the medical source document further comprises the step of distributing medical source documents to a plurality of medical coders via a computer network coupled to the hosting server to allow conversion of the medical source documents to coded medical information.

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10. A method for processing medical documentation for a health care provider, comprising the steps of:

5 receiving a medical source document for a health care provider into a hosting server enabled to receive the medical source document;

enabling a medical documentation hander to access the medical source document on the hosting server via a computer network coupled to the hosting server;

facilitating the electronic creation of processed medical data based on the medical source document analyzed by a medical documentation hander; and

10 transmitting the processed medical data to the health care provider.

11. A method as in claim 10, further comprising the step of restricting the medical documentation hander from being able to save the medical source document on a local computer.

15 12. A method as in claim 10 further comprising the step of retaining the medical source document on the hosting server while enabling the medical documentation hander to process the medical source document on a local computer.

20 13. A method as in claim 10, wherein the step of facilitating the electronic creation of processed medical data further comprises the step of facilitating the electronic creation of coded medical information that includes coded medical billing information.

14. A medical documentation processing system, comprising:

25 a plurality of electronic inputs configured to receive medical source documents for a health care provider;

a coding server, coupled to the electronic inputs, having electronic storage to store the medical source documents received; and

30 a plurality of coding queues within the coding server to which the medical source documents are assigned and through which a medical coder can access the medical source documents and create coded medical information from the medical source document;

a plurality of electronic output channels configured to transmit the coded medical information to the health care provider.

15. A device in accordance with claim 14, wherein the electronic output channels are selected from the group of electronic output channels consisting of a fax, a secure file transfer protocol (FTP), a web browser and email.
- 5      16. A device in accordance with claim 14, wherein medical source documents are assigned to the plurality of coding queues based on a priority value assigned to the medical source documents.
- 10     17. A method for processing medical documentation for health care providers, comprising the steps of:
  - receiving a treatment record from a health care service provider;
  - converting the treatment record to a medical source document;
  - assigning the medical source document to a work queue defined for a specific medical specialty; and
  - 15       enabling a medical coder to access the medical source document in the work queue through a computer network;
  - allowing the medical coder to code the medical source document which creates coded medical information; and
  - transmitting the coded medical information to the health care service provider.
- 20     18. A method as in claim 17, wherein the step of converting the treatment record to a medical source document further comprises the step of transcribing the treatment record into a medical source document.
- 25     19. A method as in claim 17, wherein the step of converting the treatment record to a medical source document further comprises the step of scanning the treatment record into a medical source document.
- 30     20. A method for processing electronic medical source documentation received for a health care provider, comprising the steps of:
  - assigning the electronic medical source document to a work pool defined for specific medical treatment types;

prioritizing the electronic medical source document for further processing based on priority factors;

enabling a medical coder to access the electronic medical source document accompanied by a priority designation in the work queue through a computer network;

5 allowing the medical coder to code the medical source document to create coded medical information; and

transmitting the coded medical information to the health care provider.

21. A method as in claim 20, wherein the step of assigning the electronic medical source

10 document to a work pool defined for specific medical treatment types further comprises the step of assigning the electronic medical source document to a work pool defined for medical specialties or sub-specialties.

22. A method as in claim 20, further comprising the step of dividing the electronic medical

15 source documents into a plurality of work queues.

23. A method as in claim 22, further comprising the step of prioritizing the electronic medical source document in a work queue based on the remaining turnaround time available.

20 24. A method as in claim 22, further comprising the step of prioritizing the electronic medical source document in a work queue based on the percentage of coded medical information that is to be coded before a defined deadline.

25 25. A method as in claim 22, further comprising the step of organizing the electronic medical source documents into batches in a work queue and then prioritizing the batches to allow for efficient coding.

30 26. A method as in claim 22, further comprising the step of dividing the electronic medical source documents into priority electronic medical source documents from health care providers and non-priority electronic medical source documents from health care providers.

27. A method as in claim 26, further comprising the step of dividing the electronic medical source documents into priority electronic medical source documents from health care

providers assigned to the medical coder and priority electronic medical source documents from health care providers not assigned to the medical coder.

28. A method as in claim 27, further comprising the step of dividing the electronic medical source documents into non-priority electronic medical source documents from health care providers assigned to the medical coder and non-priority electronic medical source documents from health care providers not assigned to the medical coder.

5 29. A medical records processing system, comprising:

10 a plurality of electronic inputs configured to receive a medical source document for a health care provider;

a hosting server, coupled to the electronic inputs, having electronic storage to store the medical source document received; and

15 a plurality of coding queues within the hosting server to which the medical source document is assigned based on a priority designation assigned to the medical source document;

a networked interface through which a medical coder can access the medical source document with the priority designation and create coded medical information from the medical source document;

20 a plurality of electronic output channels configured to transmit the coded medical information to the health care provider.

30. A system as in claim 29, wherein the electronic medical source documents are divided into a plurality of work pools based on specific medical treatment types.

25 31. A system as in claim 29, wherein the priority designation assigned to the medical source document is based on the remaining turnaround time available.

32. A system as in claim 29, wherein the priority designation assigned to the medical source document is based on the percentage of coded medical information that are to be coded before a pre-defined deadline.

30 33. A system as in claim 29, wherein electronic medical source documents are organized into batches in a work pool and the batches are prioritized to allow for efficient coding.

34. A system as in claim 29, wherein the electronic medical source documents are divided into priority electronic medical source documents from health care providers and non-priority electronic medical source documents from health care providers.

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35. A system as in claim 34, wherein the electronic medical source documents are divided into priority electronic medical source documents from health care providers assigned to the medical coder and priority electronic medical source documents from health care providers not assigned to the medical coder.

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36. A system as in claim 35, wherein the electronic medical source documents are divided into non-priority electronic medical source documents from health care providers assigned to the medical coder and non-priority electronic medical source documents from health care providers not assigned to the medical coder.

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37. A medical records processing system for integrating a medical document imaging system with a medical coding application, comprising:

    a medical source document window configured to display a medical source document for a health care provider;

20      a hosting server, coupled to the medical source document window, having electronic storage to store the medical source document being viewed in the medical source document window; and

    a coding window configured to capture information from the medical source document window and assist a medical coder in creating coded medical information from 25 the medical source document that is viewed in the medical source document window.

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38. A system as in claim 37, wherein the medical source document window further includes medical terminology and the medical terminology is able to be selected and the selection of the medical terminology enters the medical terminology into a search list.

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39. A system as in claim 38, wherein the medical coder is able to perform a search based on the medical terminology in the search list and a medical code list will be provided.

40. A system as in claim 39, wherein the medical coder is able to select a medical code from the medical code list and associate that medical code with the medical source document.

41. A system as in claim 39, wherein the medical code list provides medical codes from a plurality of coding systems.

42. A system as in claim 37, further comprising a plurality of coding queues within the hosting server to which the medical source document is assigned based on a priority assigned to the medical source document.

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43. A system as in claim 37, further comprising a networked interface through which a medical coder can access the medical source document and create coded medical information from the medical source document.

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44. A system as in claim 37, further comprising a plurality of electronic output channels configured to transmit the coded medical information to the health care provider.

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45. A system as in claim 37, further comprising a medical code validation module that checks the codes entered or selected by the medical coder to determine whether the medical codes are valid.

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46. A system as in claim 37, further comprising an electronic question system that allows a doctor to view a question and the question includes a link to the medical source document to allow the doctor to review of the medical source document and respond.

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47. A method for assisting a medical coder in processing medical records, comprising the steps of:

- displaying a medical source document, containing medical terminology from a health care provider, in a medical source document window;

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- selecting medical terminology from the medical source document in the medical source document window;

- copying the selected medical terminology to a coding window from the medical source document window;

searching for medical codes related to the medical terminology copied to the coding window;

allowing a medical coder to select a medical code representing an applied medical procedure for a patient from a medical codes list displayed to the medical coder as a result of the searching step, to create coded medical information;

5 sending coded medical information that has been created from the medical source document to a hosting server.

48. A method as in claim 47, wherein the medical coder is able to select a medical code from 10 the medical code list and associate that medical code with the medical source document.

49. A method as in claim 47, further comprising the step of allowing the medical coder to enter supplemental medical terminology in addition to the selected medical terminology.

15 50. A method as in claim 47, further comprising the step of sending the coded medical information from the hosting server to the medical service provider.

51. A method as in claim 47, further comprising the step of providing medical codes from a plurality of coding systems in the medical codes list.

20 52. A method as in claim 47, further comprising the step of providing a plurality of coding queues within the hosting server to which the medical source document is assigned based on a priority of the medical source document.

25 53. A method as in claim 47, further comprising the step of accessing the medical source document and creating coded medical information from the medical source document through a networked interface.

30 54. A method as in claim 53, further comprising the step of accessing the medical source document and creating coded medical information from the medical source document through a network browser.

55. A method as in claim 47, further comprising the step of validating codes entered or selected by the medical coder to determine whether the medical codes are valid.